

Types of Fingerprints

A fingerprint is an impression made of the ridges on a finger. The term fingerprint normally refers to impressions made by just the pad of a finger. The ridges on a finger are called friction ridges. Sometimes, these ridges are also called dermal ridges. These ridges help a person be able to grip objects and may even amplify the vibrations triggered when fingertips brush across an uneven surface.

Fingerprint identification is the process of comparing the friction ridge impression of a known print to an unknown one to see if they match. No two finger prints are ever exactly alike- not even fingerprints that are taken from the same finger and printed one right after the other. They will be similar but not exactly the same. Fingerprint identification compares prints and matches them based on their similarity to the known print.

Since your fingerprint is unique, it is like a signature. It tells who you are. There are four main types of fingerprints: arch, loop, tented arch, and whorl.

The ridges on arch fingerprints look like gentle hills. An arch fingerprint would look like this:



Tented arch prints look like very steep hills. They are very similar to arch prints, but the arch is higher in a tented arch print. A tented arch print may look like this:

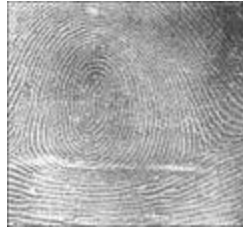


Types of Fingerprints (Cont'd)

The lines on a loop fingerprint curve around and form patterns that resemble loops. If the bottom of this pattern loops to the right, it is said to be a right loop. If the loops come from the left, then it is a left loop. A loop fingerprint could look like this:



The fourth type of fingerprint is called a whorl. Whorl fingerprints look like circles within circles. A whorl fingerprint may look like this:



When determining which type of fingerprint you are looking at, you should focus on the center of the print and follow it outward. This makes reading the print and seeing the shapes easier.

Within each of these four main categories of prints, there are additional classifications. For example, whorls can be classified as: plain whorl, accidental whorls, double loop whorls, and central pocket whorls. While there are many subdivisions, no fingerprint is ever the same.

Your fingerprint is like your signature; it is unique and can be used to identify you. In fact, history tells us that fingerprints were sometimes used instead of signatures. For example, in Babylon from 1885-1913 B.C.E, people signing legal contracts would impress the clay tablet with their finger. This would leave their fingerprint on the clay tablet and protect them against forgery. China, Japan, and Persia all used to use fingerprints instead of signatures at various points throughout history.

Types of Fingerprints Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. The term fingerprint usually refers to impressions made by:
 - a. The entire finger
 - b. The side of the finger
 - c. The pad of the finger
 - d. The index finger

2. Amongst the functions of ridges is to:
 - a. Help the person be able to grip objects
 - b. Reduce the vibrations triggered when fingertips brush across an uneven surface.
 - c. Give the hand a smooth texture
 - d. None of the above

Matching:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| _____ 3. Tented arch prints | a. Look like circles within circles |
| _____ 4. Whorl prints | b. Look like gentle hills |
| _____ 5. Arch prints | c. Look like lines forming curves to make patterns resembling loops |
| _____ 6. Loop prints | d. Look like steep hills with a high arch |

True or False:

- _____ 7. Friction ridges are also called dermal ridges.

- _____ 8. It is possible that two fingerprints are exactly alike and that is why fingerprints were not used as signatures at various points throughout history.

- _____ 9. Within each of the main four types of fingerprints, there are other classifications and subdivisions.

Types of Fingerprints Answers

Multiple Choice:

1. The term fingerprint usually refers to impressions made by:

- a. The entire finger
- b. The side of the finger
- c. **The pad of the finger**
- d. The index finger

2. Amongst the functions of ridges is to:

- a. **Help the person be able to grip objects**
- b. Reduce the vibrations triggered when fingertips brush across an uneven surface.
- c. Give the hand a smooth texture
- d. None of the above

Matching:

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a. Look like circles within circles

 a 4. Whorl prints

b. Look like gentle hills

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